

Canada Mortgage
and Housing
Corporation



Société canadienne
d'hypothèques et
de logement



CMHC Helping to
house Canadians

REGENERATION OF REGENT COURT

**FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL
PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECT**

REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

**Professional Standards Division
February 1987**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
. Introduction	1
. Project Description	2
Location	
Layout	
Units	
Community Context	
Social Context	
Financial Context	
. Project Assessment	6
. Project Improvements	8
. Project Costs	13
. Organizational Aspects	14
Federal	
Provincial	
Municipal	
Coordination	
Private Sector	
Tenant Participation	
. Credits	19
. Illustrations	

INTRODUCTION

Since about 1949, Canada's public housing programs have resulted in the provision of well over 200 000 housing units for Canadians who have required assistance in obtaining affordable shelter for themselves and their families. This housing was provided and is still maintained under various Federal/Provincial cost sharing agreements. Provision for the modernization and improvement of this housing was included in these agreements.

When this housing was relatively new, improvements and modernization needs were modest and easily accommodated within annual operating budgets of the Federal/Provincial partnership. As this housing ages, however, the earliest of which is approaching 35 years of age, there is increasing evidence that some aspects of this housing can no longer adequately meet current tenant needs and rapidly increasing maintenance and operating costs cannot be appropriately addressed unless major improvements are undertaken.

Such improvements are not only costly but are complex to undertake as they often involve the temporary dislocation of the existing tenant group and/or undertaking major construction activities on occupied housing sites. This raises new issues for the Federal/Provincial partnership for which there is little precedence.

As for most other activities, government financial resources are constrained and it is critical that the dollars made available to address issues associated with aging process, are used to achieve the most benefits to both the occupants and the Federal/Provincial partnership at the most reasonable costs.

This paper describes one of the first Federal/Provincial initiatives to comprehensively address the impact of the aging process on Canada's public housing stock.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Location

Regent Court F.P.I. is a Federal-Provincial Public Housing project built in 1959 located in Regina, Saskatchewan containing 109 dwelling units in 16 residential low rise structures. The project is located on a 9.7 acre site in a modest, predominantly single-family neighbourhood approximately three and one-half miles from the centre of the city. The project site is bounded on the south by open land of approximately nine acres which contained an open storm drainage channel; on the north by neighbourhood shopping, regional library and row housing rental units; on the east by modest single-family units and a small number of walkup apartments and on the west by a public school.

Layout

The layout of the project was typical of the courtyard design of many public housing projects in the 1950's, with a rectilinear siting of building structures enclosing open green spaces. The relatively low density of 11.2 units per acre was typical of this design. One parking space for each unit was provided on asphalt surfaced areas in four locations on the site. Asphalt was also used for sidewalks and at the rear of all ground-oriented units extending up to 25 feet from the buildings. No private outdoor yard space was delineated and the remainder of the open space was grassed but contained no recreational facilities or equipment nor any areas designated for recreational activities of any kind.

Accommodation was provided as follows:

- 10 - one-bedroom, one-storey, senior citizen units at
498 sq. ft. per unit (46.3m² per unit)
- 6 - two-bedroom, one-storey, row house units at
738 sq. ft. per unit (68.6m² per unit)

- 55 - three-bedroom, two-storey, row house units at
1,033 sq. ft. per unit (95.9m² per unit)
- 18 - four-bedroom two-storey, row house units at
1 233 sq. ft. per unit (114.5m² per unit)
- 20 - two-bedroom apartment units in two walkup apartment
buildings at 686 sq. ft. per unit (63.7m² per unit)

Unit Description

Row housing units were equipped with individual natural gas furnaces using a forced air metal duct system, 60 amp electrical service, copper plumbing, standard porcelain washroom fixtures in bathrooms, but no shower facilities and single stainless steel sinks in kitchens. Electric range and refrigerator were provided by tenants. No machine washer or dryer facilities were provided unless arranged by the individual tenant.

General finishes in the units included vinyl asbestos tile flooring, painted drywall or painted concrete block walls, painted drywall or acoustic tile ceilings and unfinished basements. No closet doors were provided. Fenestration was by aluminum sliding windows.

The two walkup apartment buildings were two and one-half storey masonry structures using clay facing brick and backup concrete block, wood floor and ceiling joists and wood rafters. A central forced air natural gas heating system was provided for each walkup apartment building adjusted by a thermostat located in the common corridor. No security system at the main entrance to the building was provided nor any voice communication system to the individual units from the entrance points. A communal laundry facility was located in the basement of each walkup apartment building. Internal equipment and finishes of the apartment units were similar to the row housing units, other than the interior wall surfaces which were predominantly painted concrete block.

Community Context

The Regent Court project had a tenant association but it had been dormant for six months as the president had resigned and her position had not been filled. Tenants were represented on the local Community Association by a social worker paid by a community service grant from the Provincial Social Services Department. One unit in the project was allocated for the use of the Tenant Association. The social worker was to encourage organized tenant activities and to advise tenants of community programs and services which were available to the tenant group. Community programs and services included skills and crafts education programs, supervised sports activities, specialized teenage activities, all of which were operated and funded by the City of Regina.

The City of Regina is divided into "local communities" for the purpose of fostering strong community associations all of which are financed out of municipal tax dollars used to support the associations and their activities. Many of the sports activities such as hockey and soccer are highly organized on a competitive inter-community association level. Any resident of Regina may obtain access to these facilities by joining their local community association at a very nominal charge.

In addition to these programs and facilities, project residents were well served by local shopping, a regional library, churches, elementary and secondary high schools, and good public transportation facilities all within easy walking distance of the project.

No formal community organization activities existed among the senior citizens although a number of programs of the local community association were aimed primarily at elderly citizens.

Social Context

In November 1980 the Regent Court population was 320 people made up of 138 adults and 182 children. Of the 109 dwelling units, 10 were senior citizens units accommodating four couples and six singles. There were 60 single-parent households in the project and 60 per cent of these single parents worked outside of the home on a full or part-time basis. Of this category 40 per cent were on government assistance. Of the child population approximately 70 per cent were pre-schoolers. At the time of the initial study the project was experiencing an annual turn-over rate of over 40 per cent despite the shortage of public housing accommodation in Regina, only one in three applicants offered accommodation in Regent Court accepted tenancy.

Considerable damage due to vandalism was evident and evictions ran as high as four per month. The senior citizens who had fenced off the space on each side of their unit expressed fears for their personal safety when venturing out after dark.

The deteriorated condition of the project in turn led to a tenant selection process by the local housing authority which further accelerated the deterioration process. The appearance of the project began to constrain the tenants from becoming part of the normal community fabric who isolated themselves from the available amenities and support services.

Financial Context

Regent Court F.P. was built under Section 40 of the National Housing Act which provides for the assumption of shared capital and operating costs by the federal and provincial governments, 75 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. The province may enter into partnership with the city as was the case in Regina, whereby the city assumes five per cent of the capital and operating costs. The debt was amortized over 50 years.

The project is managed on behalf of the Federal/Provincial Partnership by the Regina Housing Authority which is responsible to the Provincial Housing Corporation. Management and operating funds are provided by the Partnership on an agreed cost sharing formula. Estimates of operating and maintenance costs are submitted annually by the province to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the federal representative responsible for the federal interests in public housing programs.

The rents charged to tenants under Section 40 are based upon a graduated income scale which requires tenants to pay up to a maximum of 25 per cent of their family income less utility costs where the utilities are paid by the tenant. The remainder of the operating costs are shared by the Partnership.

In addition to normal maintenance and operating costs, allowance is made for modernization and improvements each year and the costs associated with these activities are also shared 75/25. This item was never intended to fund comprehensive modernization initiatives. In general, the modernization and improvement portion of the operating subsidy budget seldom exceeds 10 per cent of the annual operating costs.

PROJECT ASSESSMENT

In the 25 years since Regent Court was built, there had been no major changes to Regina's urban development goals which had impacted on the project. The surrounding area continued to be relatively stable, well provided with communities services and amenities, and despite the relatively low density of development, was not yet experiencing pressure for any increase in land utilization. However, Regent Court was no longer meeting the needs of its tenant group.

The original design of the project, which separated the automobile from the unit to achieve a "park like" setting for the units, was viewed as a contributory cause of the growing failure of the project to meet tenant

needs. In addition to the loss of the convenience of a close car/unit relationship demanded by the severe prairie winter, the lack of a "street address" resulting from this design did nothing to develop a "pride of address" which tends to accompany housing oriented to a street. The creation of large open "park like" areas were in themselves of little value in their unplanned state, and in fact their very size contributed to the inconvenient movement on site and the growing sense of insecurity of the residents. The shift to predominantly single parent families, was also seen to intensify the need for controlled play facilities, privacy, security and availability of support services.

A series of preliminary studies were undertaken by independent study teams using existing CMHC housing standards or design guidelines as the qualitative criteria. These studies involved four major factors:

Physical Condition of Structures

This study was undertaken by CMHC inspectors. The assessment was done on a selected sample basis, examining at least one of each typical unit types. A list of required improvements was prepared together with a preliminary cost estimate for the work required.

Energy Audit

The regional offices of the National Research Council of Canada, located near Regina, provided on-site tests to establish air leakage in the units and with the use of a computer model, identified those components of the building envelope which were placing most demands on energy consumption. The computer model also identified potential energy savings which would result from modifications to any one or more of the building envelope components. A list of priority actions relating to improvements to the building envelope and aimed at achieving maximum energy savings was then developed.

Site Engineering and Infrastructure Assessment

Because of particular grading and minor flooding problems on the site a separate assessment was made of the existing site engineering factors. This study was undertaken by a private consulting engineering firm who provided an assessment of site development conditions and proposals for full site rehabilitation. Preliminary cost estimates were provided.

Dwelling Unit Suitability

A private architectural firm was retained to assess the suitability of existing dwelling units to continue to meet tenants needs according to changing livability norms, or, to identify what modifications would be required to do so. This included the assessment of open space utilization on site. An assessment of the site design and each unit type was provided, together with proposed design modifications and estimated costs.

These four studies were then coordinated into a preliminary proposal for the regeneration of the project and the viability of undertaking the improvements assessed against other options.

PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

Of major importance was upgrading and improvement to the units and their immediate environment in a way which would not only achieve operating and maintenance economies but also result in a shelter environment which encouraged pride of tenancy and a sense of responsibility for territory extending beyond the front and rear doors of the units. It was therefore considered important to establish a better sense of "street address", by introducing vehicular movement through the site to re-establish a "front and rear yard" territory for each unit. Major changes to the density of the site which would tend to distinguish the project from its surrounding neighbourhood fabric were avoided. A small social recreational building which would be

be capable of adaption for a day care use was provided for the tenant organization. Recommended changes to achieve a more balanced tenant selection were discussed with the local housing authority and assurance that ongoing social service mechanisms would continue to be provided by the provincial and municipal partners responsible for such functions was obtained.

Many of these proposals were aimed at re-establishing a relationship between the Regent Court project and its neighbourhood in order to remove the inhibiting factors which were preventing the residents from taking full advantage of all the community services and support programs.

Since the findings from the preliminary study showed that the majority of the building structures were structurally sound, private consultants were retained to prepare the detailed rehabilitation plans and documents necessary for public tendering on the improvements. The detailed planning stage further identified the specific improvements required to the dwelling units and their environment. This stage also determined those improvements which would be common to all units and identified other kinds of improvements which would be required only in selected units.

The final determination of the exact number of improvements to each unit was made following the award to the successful bidding contractor who had bid on a fixed number of improvements in all units and had provided a unit price for these activities which would vary unit to unit. This final unit determination was made only after a unit inspection by the contractor and the architect, and consideration of suggestions by the previous tenant.

During the course of these detailed investigations it was found that the condition of the 10 senior citizens units was such that rehabilitation became questionable. As the units also contained functional layout problems, the decision was made to demolish these units and replace them with new units.

While it was originally intended to rehouse the senior citizens in new units on the site, all senior citizens were eventually rehoused to their satisfaction off-site and the replacement units were changed to family accommodation. Sixteen new family housing units similar in form to the existing units were incorporated into the project.

In the remaining 99 units the following list of improvements summarizes the majority of the types of improvements made:

Interior - All Units

- . Provision of new carpet with underlay in the main living areas, master bedroom, corridors and stairs.
- . Provision of new sheet flooring in entrance vestibule, kitchen and bathroom(s).
- . Provision of new window sill and new wood casement windows (previously aluminum sliders).
- . Strapping and drywalling of all painted concrete block wall surfaces.
- . Increased electrical service from 60 amp to 100 amp service.
- . Replacement of all electrical outlets.
- . Replacement of all exterior doors in row housing units with new solid core wood doors and aluminum storm doors.
- . Installation of tub enclosure and shower facility in main bathroom.
- . Installation of new sink and vanity in all main bathrooms.
- . Reorganized kitchen counters to provide for increased space for range (24" to 30"): provide for less hazardous location of range.
- . Provision of new counter tops in kitchen.
- . Provision of new doors and hardware to all kitchen cabinets; increase shelving.
- . Provision of closet doors for all clothes storage spaces.
- . Repainting of unit interiors.
- . Provision of washer and dryer for each row housing unit.
- . Provision of sufficient smoke detectors in all units.

Interior - Selected Units

- . Replacement of plumbing fixtures as required.
- . Replacement of individual gas fired, forced air furnaces as required in row housing units.
- . Replacement of electrical lighting fixtures as required.
- . Patching, repairing or replacement of doors, frames, baseboard as required.
- . Repairing of basement stairs and provision of new handrails as required in row housing units.

Interior Apartment Blocks

- . Provision of thermostat heating controls for each unit.
- . Provision of audio contact system from front lobby to each unit.
- . Provision of electronic security system for front vestibule.
- . Upgrading of communal laundry facilities and provision for adjacent basement play space with washroom.
- . Repairing and repainting of all communal recreation and corridor spaces.
- . Provision of exit and emergency lighting.
- . Fireguarding of corridor ceilings; provision of sound insulation, drywall and painting of all corridor walls.
- . Replacement of all corridor ceiling fixtures.
- . Provision of increased fire rated doors for mechanical room.

Exterior - All Row Housing Units

- . Replacement of front concrete steps to unit.
- . Provision of fenced rear yards including provision of wood patio deck and exterior storage provisions.
- . Provision of electrical plug-in for automobile in winter.
- . Provision of exterior hose bibs front and back for unit.
- . Reshingling of roof.

- . Levelling of all window wells.
- . Repointing of chimneys.
- . Provision of new mail box and unit identification number.
- . Patching and cleaning of masonry as required.
- . Repainting of all exterior paint surfaces.

Energy Efficient Improvements

- . All attic spaces insulated to provide R40 insulation (separate Federal Program).
- . Provision of new storm doors for all exterior doors.
- . Caulking, weatherstripping as required for all openings on exterior walls and ceiling access hatch.
- . Provision of storm windows on all basement windows.
- . Provision of insulation for all joist header spaces from interior.
- . Insulation of chimney chase at firestops.
- . Insulation of basement walls above grade and down to two feet below grade R12 insulation.
- . Service to all individual furnaces for increased operating efficiency.

Relocation Strategy

Because of the nature of the improvements required, no attempt was made to undertake any of the improvements with the occupants remaining in place. This factor required full and lengthy discussions with both the local housing authority and the tenants to arrive at a mutually satisfactory temporary relocation strategy. The strategy which was ultimately agreed to, met the following conditions:

1. No one would be relocated off-site. This was accomplished by utilizing the high turnover rate in the project to provide the initial bank of vacant units.

2. All tenants would be given at least one month's notice and priorities would be dictated by the contractors work schedule once established.
3. Improvements would be made by building structure rather than by individual units.
4. Every effort would be made to return the tenant to their previous unit if they requested it, but this would not be guaranteed. This strategy was generally a one-move strategy following the rehabilitation of the first block of units.
5. The local housing authority would assume the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of the relocation as required; the costs, however, were borne by the partnership.

PROJECT COSTS

Tenders were called in September 1982. The total cost of the work was approximately \$4 million which was comprised of the following:

- . Comprehensive rehabilitation of 99 of the existing 109 units - 40% of total costs;
- Demolition of 10 units because of high rehabilitation costs and the construction of 16 new housing units and a social recreational facility. - 25% of total costs;
- Major rehabilitation of the site including a new internal project road, full regrading of the site, new storm draining system and new parking provisions and landscaping - 25% of total costs.
- Soft costs - including architectural and engineering fees, site supervision, temporary relocation of tenants, insurance - 10% of total costs.

This was a new initiative for both the Federal and Provincial partners and there was no established funding mechanism specifically allocating dollars for the kind of improvements which are being undertaken. Funds were identified from existing annual capital and operating budgets for Section 40 housing allocated for and by the Province of Saskatchewan and the Federal Government. The nature of the improvements were classified as either a capital improvement or an operating cost and funds were sought from the appropriate budgets to meet the resulting percentage breakdown which was approximately 70 per cent capital and 30 per cent operating cost. As the Federal Provincial Partnership is responsible for over 200 000 public housing units, it is anticipated that future and more encompassing initiatives will be accomplished by pre-established funding mechanisms aimed directly at the regeneration of existing public housing stock.

As the tenants pay according to their income, there was no financial impact on any of the tenants resulting from the improvements made.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

Responsibilities and Roles of Government Partners

Federal

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) assumed the lead federal role in the regeneration of the Regent Court project. CMHC at the request of the province and local housing authority, undertook to provide resources for all initial project assessments, retention of external consultants as required, the preparation of all detailed plans and documentation required to implement the improvements and the provision of the partnership project manager and other administrative staff required to manage the delivery of the proposed improvements. The costs for these activities other than professional fee costs for the external consultants was borne by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The Federal Government assumed 75 per cent of the costs for improvements to Regent Court according to the existing shared formula for Section 40 housing.

Provincial

The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and the Regina Housing Authority participated in the development and approval of all proposals for the regeneration of Regent Court and, where required, provided staff resources to bring the project to fruition. The Regina Housing Authority, in particular, assumed major administrative responsibilities associated with tenant involvement in the regeneration process and in facilitating the temporary tenant relocation during the implementation stage. Liaison with tenants at all stages was arranged through the Regina Housing Authority. The Provincial Government assumed 20 per cent of the cost of improvements to Regent Court according to the existing shared formula for Section 40 housing.

Municipal

The City of Regina acted through their City Manager in a full participating role in the development and approval of all proposals for the regeneration of Regent Court. The City provided a strong co-ordination role among the various municipal departments which provide separate departmental approvals of the proposed improvements. The City also facilitated coordination among the private utilities affected by project improvements. Under an existing agreement on Section 40 housing with the Province of Saskatchewan, the City of Regina assumed financial responsibility for five per cent of the total costs.

Mechanism for Coordinating Roles

From the inception of the first studies through to completion of all project improvement activities, coordination was provided by a Partnership Steering Committee on which senior managerial representatives of the partnership were in attendance, together with a tenant representative. Government partnership members included the General Manager of CMHC for the Prairie Region, the CMHC Provincial Director for Saskatchewan, the General

Manager of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, the Chairman of the Regina Housing Authority, the local Manager of the Regina Housing Authority and the City Manager for the City of Regina. Senior representation on this steering committee allowed for quick decisions to be made during all the stages of the regeneration process.

Private Sector Involvement

While not involved in the ownership or financing of the rehabilitation of Regent Court, the private sector participated as follows:

- a) Preparation of detailed drawings and specifications for the rehabilitation of the existing units, and the construction of the new replacement units and the new social recreational facility by private architectural consultants.
- b) Preparation of detailed drawings and specifications for all site and engineering improvements by private engineering consultants.
- c) The normal public tender process was utilized for all aspects of the work and contracts were awarded to: a private residential builder/contractor; a private engineering contractor; and a private demolition contractor for the respective parts of the regeneration activities.
- d) During implementation, security personnel for on-site 24 hour security and personnel of independent moving companies required for tenant moves were also obtained from the private sector.

Considerable negotiation took place with representatives of the private sector building community during the preparation of detailed plans, specifications and tender package in order to ensure that the concerns of the bidding community with respect to a relatively unique activity could be addressed most prudently in the substance and format of the tender package.

Tenant Participation

The tenants in the Regent Court project were actively involved in the regeneration throughout the process. The original focus on Regent Court was the result of a request from the Tenant Organization made to the Federal Provincial partnership for improved tenant social and recreational facilities. It was the investigation into this request that identified the more fundamental issues of the Regent Court project.

While certain facilities were not immediately available to the residents of Regent Court, such as a day care facility, in fact, the neighbourhood did provide a great variety of amenities and services which the residents of Regent Court were failing to use. The reasons given by the tenants explaining their reluctance to avail themselves of the existing community resources, consistently related to their embarrassment of the quality of their shelter and project environment in comparison to the rest of the neighbourhood, caused in large part by the very apparent barrack-like institutional appearance of the Regent Court project. Consequently, the initiative to undergo a program of comprehensive project improvement was enthusiastically supported by the majority of the tenants. Their full participation was assured by their representation on the partnership steering committee and through the series of tenants meetings held at various stages of the regeneration process.

Major participation was required by the tenants to formulate the temporary relocation strategy needed to facilitate the proposed improvements. This ongoing participation led to a strengthening of the tenant organization giving it a strong purpose and a major role in the regeneration process.

One major need of the Regent Court tenants, not answered by existing community services, was a day care facility. The Federal Provincial partnership has no mandate to fund such a facility. What was achieved, however, was the provision of a modest social recreational facility for the tenants which was designed in such a way that, in addition to other uses, it could be adopted for day care use by the Tenants Organization.

Strong tenant participation in the regeneration process was considered essential not only to the development of appropriate regeneration proposals but also to develop a strong sense of involvement and purpose which would benefit the project long after the regeneration improvements had been completed.

REGENT COURT REGENERATION

CREDITS

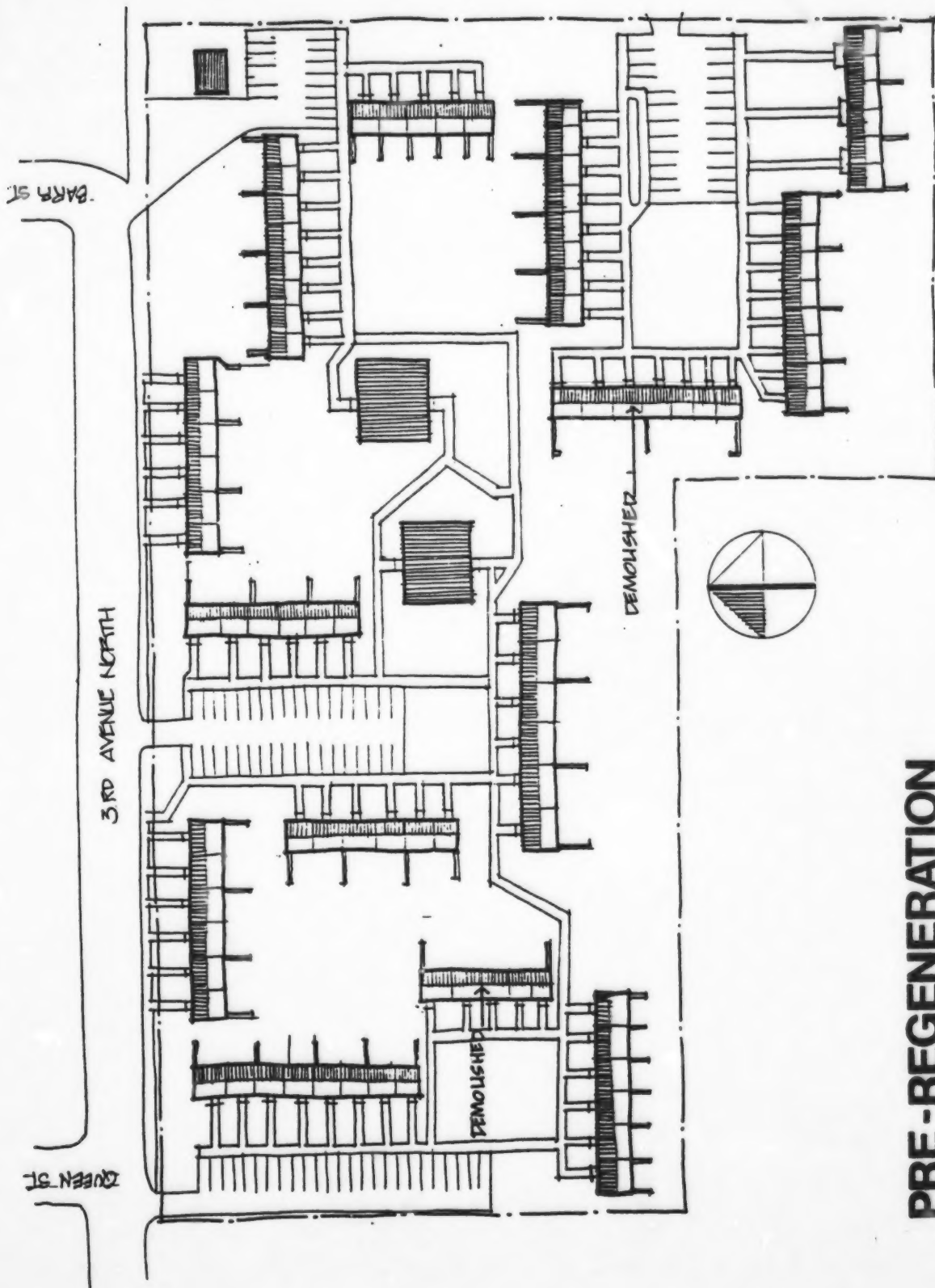
Consultants

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Preliminary Assessment | - | D. Thane, Architect |
| Architect | - | Stone/Croft Architects |
| Engineers | - | Yoneda & Associates |
| | - | Reid Crowther & Partners |
| Energy Assessment | - | National Research Council (Sask.) |

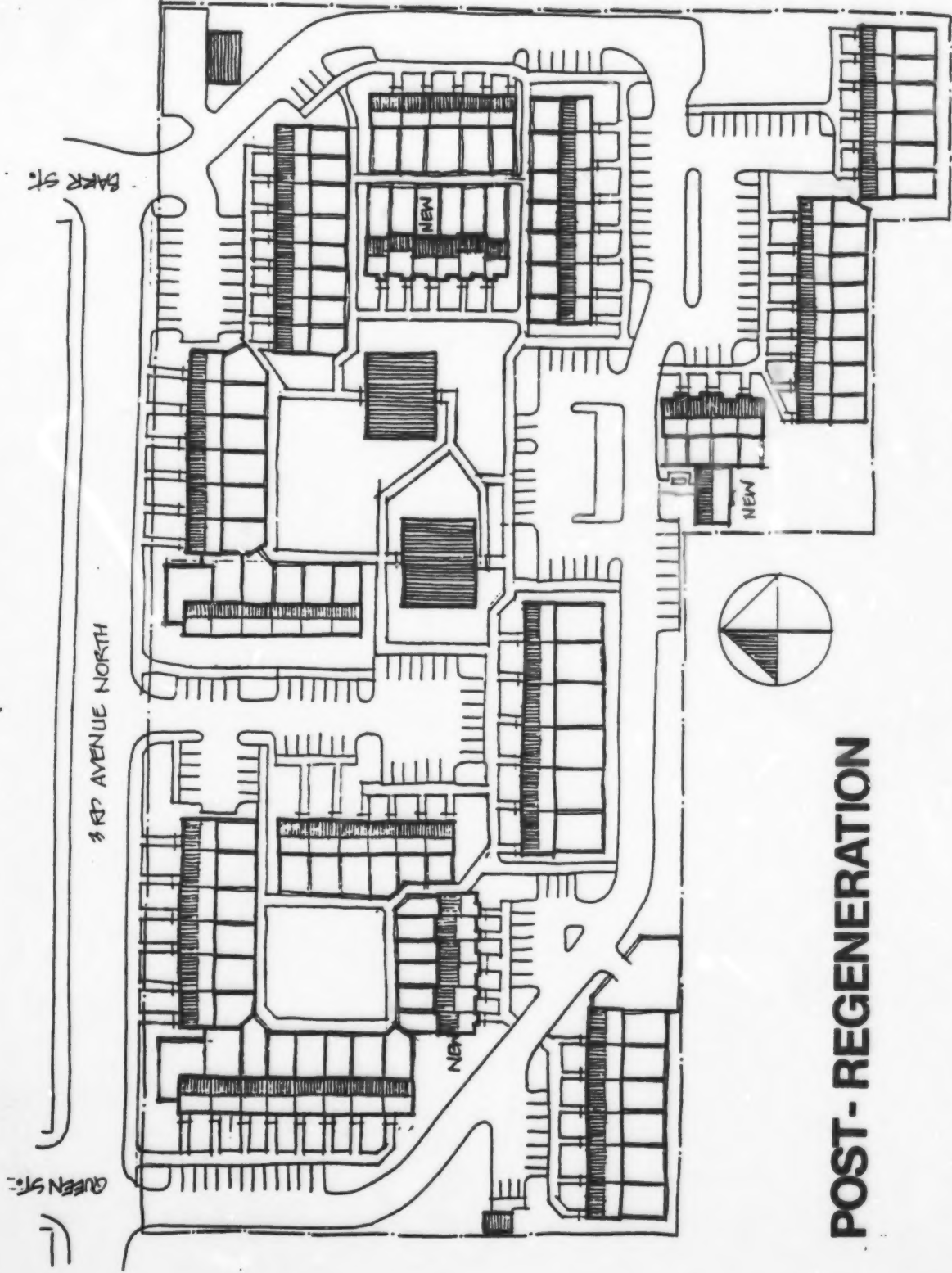
Contractors

- Cairns Homes Ltd. (unit rehab and construction)
- Dura Structures Ltd. (soc./rec. centre)
- Ellsmere Contractors (Landscaping)
- Roscoe Enterprises Ltd. (demolition)
- South Construction Ltd. (siteworks and services)
- Comfort Mechanical Ltd. (furnace replacement)
- Signal Industries Ltd. (street and parking signs)





PRE-REGENERATION



POST-REGENERATION

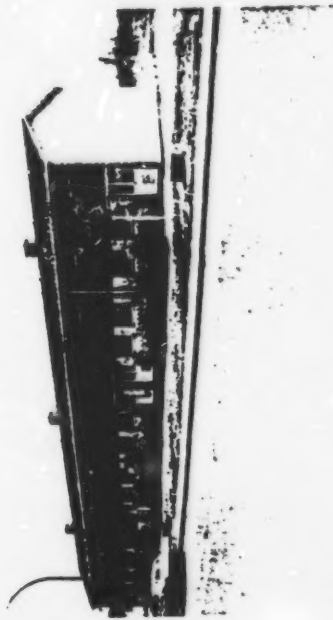


Figure 1. Regent Court. Front of row housing before.



Figure 2. Front of row housing after.

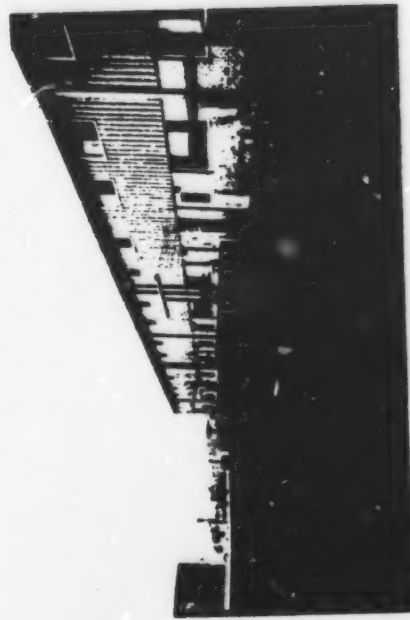


Figure 3. Rear patios of row housing before.

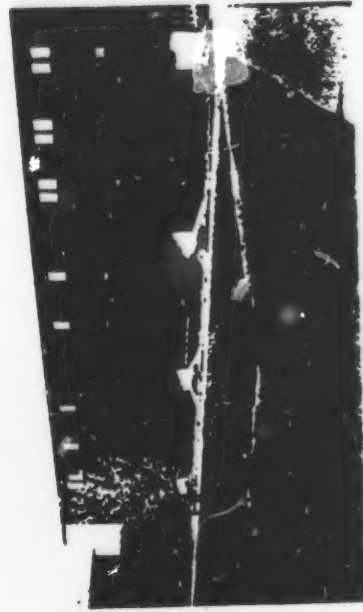


Figure 4. Rear of row housing after.

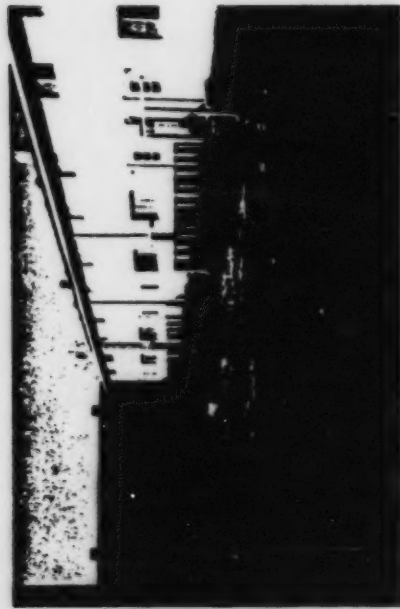


Figure 5. Rear courtyard of row housing before.

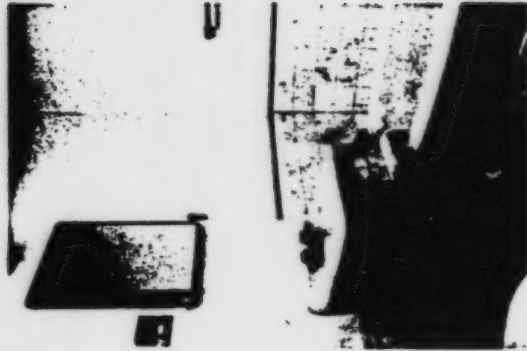


Figure 7.
Bathroom before.

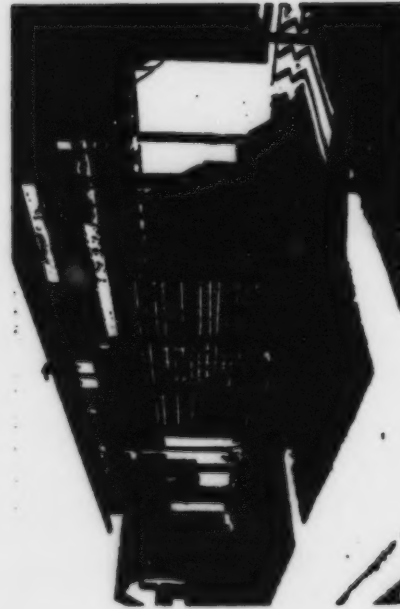


Figure 6. Detail of front of row housing.



Figure 8.
Bathroom after.